19: Marshall M-5 (ca. 1910) 1922 AP1 Burma
Karen AP7

608 572 and a young woman. If the relationship is formed by the latter, they probably have met at a funeral celebration and become interested in each other. The ceremonial requires each of the pair to twist seven strands of cotton into a cord to serve as a necklace. The youth first puts his cord over the young woman's head, taking great care not to touch her head-dress or person. In similar fashion the young woman slips her cord over the young man's head. Probably a formula was originally repeated in confirmation of this dual action. If so, it has vanished together with any consultation of the chicken bones that may have taken place. The cords must be worn seven days without being broken or removed, lest the agreement be made void. Thereafter they address each other only as "mwi." The relation thus established does not allow one to take any liberties with the other, but rather tends to the safeguarding of each as if they were brother and sister. The relationship is supposed to be for life, but does not, of course, prevent the separation of the two by a greater or less distance. In such an event, when one goes into the neighborhood of the other, a present is taken along for one's "mwi." Often mementoes or gifts are exchanged when the compact is first made. It is current usage for school friends to call one another "mwi" without any ceremony, but simply in token of kindly regard.

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THE GUEST-CHAMBER AND CLUB-ROOM

574 576 [688] In the earlier days among the Karen of the hills the "blaw" was an important feature of village life.[1] It is still retained, although it seems to have lost some of its former significance. It is the guest and club-room reserved in the central part of the village-house. Strangers coming in for a visit or passing by on their journey are entertained here. Such a convenience was quite necessary in the days when the tabu of the "Bgha" feast was strictly observed, and no outsider was allowed to enter the family-rooms. My party and I have been entertained in the "blaw" of villages in the Pegu Hills on the Tharrawaddy side, while on tour. In one village, which had adopted some Buddhist practices, along one side of the guest-room extended a high shelf upon which stood a small image of Gautama Buddha, with the usual offerings of paper flags and wilted leaves and flowers. At the back of the room was the raised dais on which I spread my bed, but I was pre-

[1] In Sir J. G. Scott's *Burma, A Handbook*, p. 123, this institution is referred to under the name of "haw." See also *Upper Burma Gazetteer*, Vol. I, Pt. I, 538, ff.